



MARICOPA COUNTY
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COUNTY ADVISES CONSUMERS TO SCRUB PRODUCE BEFORE EATING

Two Cases of Salmonella Reported in Arizona

(Phoenix)— Following a recent outbreak of Salmonella associated with eating cantaloupe in California and two reported cases in Arizona, the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department advises consumers to always thoroughly wash the skin of all fruits and vegetables that are eaten raw before consuming them.

“People can reduce the chances of contamination by scrubbing produce with a brush under cool, running water immediately before eating,” said David Ludwig, Environmental Health Division Manager. Don’t buy unrefrigerated pre-cut fruit from street vendors or farmer’s markets, wash your hands before and after handling the food and refrigerate unused portions immediately, Ludwig said.

County and State Health Departments are currently investigating the two local incidents. California reported 17 illnesses and the death of a woman from contaminated cantaloupes in early April. Seven other states, including Arizona reported 13 other cases of illness.

An uncommon type of Salmonella, known as Salmonella poona, caused the California outbreak. The source of the outbreak is under investigation. Because cantaloupes and other produce are grown on the ground, their skin can become contaminated in the field by human or animal waste, or during distribution prior to sale.

The symptoms of Salmonella poona include fever, abdominal cramps and diarrhea and generally develop one to three days after eating contaminated food. While most individuals who become ill from Salmonella poona recover in three to five days without medical intervention, the infection can be life threatening to young children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

Consumers should report any food-related health complaints to the Environmental Services Complaint Line at (602) 506-6616 and consult with their physician if they have these symptoms.

About the Environmental Health Division

The Environmental Health Division of the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department reviews and approves construction plans for food production facilities including: restaurants, grocery stores, processors, pet grooming establishments, hotels, boarding homes, supervised care homes and school cafeterias within Maricopa County. Environmental Health issues construction and operating permits, inspects establishments according to the Maricopa County Environmental Health Code and manages other special programs related to foodborne illness outbreaks, education and training.